

Sheikh al- Islam Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ

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Translators Foreword

Taqi al-Din Ahmed Ibn Taymiyyah al-Harrani 728AH (rahimahullah) is considered a controversial individual amongst both past and modern day Ash'ari Scholars. His stance on the Divine attributes of Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) led to allegations of *Tashbih* (anthropomorphism) and even *Tajsim* (corporealism). In such controversial matters it is important to maintain balance and to not hasten towards the *Takfir* of individuals.

Ibn Taymiyyah RA has himself mentioned in his Majmu'ah al Fatawa, "As for Aqidah related matters many have hastened towards the *Takfir* of those who have erred. This approach was not found in any of the Imams of the Muslims. It is in fact a principle founded by those who innovated and opposed anyone who differed with them, like the *Khawarij*, *Mu'tazilah* and the *Jahmiyyah*."

The author of the following extract, Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi 1420AH (*rahimahullah*) was a luminary of the seminary of Deoband. The short extract reiterates the approach of the Scholars of the Ulama of Deoband with regards to individuals such as Ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*). Former Principal of Dar al-Ulum Deoband, Qari Muhammed Tayyib (*rahimahullah*) explains, "The Ulama of Deoband hold in high esteem and respect all categories and ranks of personalities whether they are in the path of *Tariqah* or *Shari'ah*. The respect shown to the Great Muhaddith Ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) is shown to Sheikh Muhy al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi (*rahimahullah*)."

No human besides the Messengers/Prophets are beyond erring. Ibn Taymiyyah(*rahimahullah*) is no exception. The extract below attempts to deflect the legitimacy of allegations of *Tajsim* against Ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*). It must be borne in mind that many other allegations against him have been left unanswered and in light of those allegations (contrary to the opinion of the Author), Ibn Taymiyyah will have definitely erred in matters pertaining to the Divine attributes of Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*). For this we pray that his many good deeds and services for this Din are a means of his forgiveness. (Ameen)

The extract has been translated in idiomatic format in an attempt to make it reader friendly. I pray that Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) accepts this feeble effort from this Lowly servant and forgive any shortcomings.

Sheikh Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi (rahimahullah) writes in his *Tarikh e Da'wat wa Azimat 154/2...*

“The main cause of opposition towards Ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) was his own opposing of the *Ash'ari* creed with regards to Kalam related issues and the divine attributes of *Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala)*. This wasn't opposition of the *Ash'ari* school alone, it was also opposition of the creed of the *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah* as a whole. Aligning one's self with such views was considered ignorance or otherwise abhorrence towards the *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah*.

Ibn Taymiyyah opposed the mainstream viewpoint of the *Ahlu Sunnah* with great valour and bravery to such an extent that he presented the opinions of the *Sahabah*, *Tabi'un*, *Mutaqaddimun*, *Mutakallimun*, *Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari*, *Qadhi Abu Bakr al-Baqillani* and *Imam al-Haramayn*. He attempted to prove using quotations from their books that all these luminaries considered it necessary to bring *Iman* on *Allah's* divine attributes. He accepted the reality of these verses in a way which was in accordance with the verse, “*Laysa ka Mithlihi Shay'*” (There is nothing whatsoever unto the like of Him), purity from *Tashbih* (Anthropomorphism), *Tajsim* (Corporealism) and *Ta'til* (divesting Allah of all attributes). He further claimed that not even a word that is clear and unambiguous from the *Sahabah*, *Tabi'un* and the *Salaf* can be found to contradict this.

At this moment in time the effects of the *Ash'ari* school and the Scholars of Kalam had spread throughout the whole Muslim world. The difference in opinion of *Ibn Taymiyyah*, which was based on a strictly academic basis, was now considered a *Bid'ah* (innovation) and '*yattabi'u ghaira sabil al-Mu'minin*' (Following other than the path of the believers).

Allegations of *Tajsim* (corporealism) had now surfaced against him. Due to emphasis being placed on *Ta'wil* (Allegorical interpretation) at the time, *Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullah)* concentrated his efforts on refuting *Ta'wil* (Allegorical interpretation). It was due to these refutations that people began doubting him with *Tajsim* (corporealism). Such extremism took place in this regard that people attributed rumours to him of opinions that would clearly establish him amongst the *Mujassimah* (corporealists). One such instance was his speech at *Jami'ah Umawiyyah*, Damascus. He descended from one step of the pulpit to another and claimed, “Allah descends like this descent of mine.” Ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) and his students both vehemently refuted these allegations by stating that they condemn *Tajsim* (corporealism) just as they condemn *Ta'til* (divesting Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* of all attributes). Even still, the severity with which he refuted *Ta'wil* (Allegorical interpretation) was used by his opposer's to prove his *Tajsim* (corporealism) and this became a

strong reason behind the opposition of Ulama towards *Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullah)* and his followers.

The reality is that the gap between *Ta'wil* (Allegorical interpretation) and *Tajsim* (corporealism) is so fine, many are unable to comprehend it. Many '*Hanabila*' and negators of *Ta'wil* have fallen within the boundaries of *Tajsim* (corporealism). The idea of *Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullah)* being from those accused of *Tajsim* is not far-fetched nor illogical, however, the reality is that he is free from such accusations."